

The relaxation of ownership rules in 1996 was a huge mistake. As a result, a few companies such as Clear Channel and Cumulus have taken over huge numbers of radio and TV stations in the United States and severely limited the information sources available to average Americans. We have the right to know that our airwaves are used for the public benefit--not just to provide "entertainment", but to provide a balanced source of information about what is happening in our country and the world as a whole. As a result of the new ownership rules, local areas are saturated with an endless stream of biased information from a single political viewpoint. Whether or not you agree with this viewpoint is irrelevant: the effect is that the normal process of debate and discussion is reduced to one that is largely determined by a few major corporations who can use this control to affect our political process, attacking political and social agendas of the right or left and creating the potential for corporate control of our political climate. Fascism is not a term to be used lightly, but its basic definition is the integration of the agendas of big business and big government is a way that creates a monopoly on public discourse and power, pushing the average citizens out of the process, or manipulating his or her opinions for their own benefit. For that matter, socialism is not far from this picture, except that big government is in the driving seat. Traditional American values rooted in both the Republican and Democratic parties, have always been adamantly opposed to this conjunction of business and government and the threat to the open and free expression of commerce, political viewpoints, and culture.

Your current plan, as I understand it, would have the effect of making an incredibly bad situation even worse. A single company could potentially control EVERY Radio and TV channel in a given market, allowing them absolute control over public, social and cultural discourse. Please do not allow this to happen. Instead, there should be a rational scaling back of the erroneous decision of 1996 before it is too late and every politician (and FCC commissioner) owes their job to the companies they are supposed to be regulating. Perhaps 7 stations nationwide is too limiting, but 35% of the market is far too much (meaning three companies could conceivably own everything--even today--and of course their strings could in fact be pulled by the same small clique of individuals).

The airwaves belong to the American people as a whole, they should NEVER be allowed to be monopolized by a single organization. We need MORE points of view, not less. 10 years ago, I would happily tune in to listen to political commentary provided by anyone from the far right to the far left. Whether I agreed or disagreed I was always stimulated, and I could balance them against each other to see how they approached specific issues and problems. This public debate is almost gone from our airwaves (I can only get right-wing viewpoints in Sacramento, for example), and may be fatally affected by any relaxation of ownership rules. Already, I am afraid to even tune in, since I know that every station will be carrying the same corporate sponsored position with no possibility for opposing viewpoints anywhere on the dial.

Your job is to represent the interests of the American people. I can only hope that you will take a stand for those people, rather

than the powerful lobbies pushing for greater and greater control.

Thank you for taking the time to review my petition.